

Message Text

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ACTION AF-08

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 DHA-02 IO-13 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04

H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01

SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 AID-05 TRSE-00 OMB-01 /075 W

-----020137Z 127618 /14

R 010800Z MAR 77

FM AMEMBASSY MONROVIA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4189

C O N F I D E N T I A L MONROVIA 2207

E.O. 11652 GDS

TAGS: SHUM, PGOV, PINT, PINR, LI

SUBJECT: HUMAN RIGHTS: SENATOR SHAD TUBMAN'S VIEWS

REF: MONROVIA 2095

1. SENATOR W.V.S. (SHAD) TUBMAN, SON OF THE LATE PRESIDENT TUBMAN, AND CHAIRMAN OF THE SENATE FOREIGN RELATIONS COMMITTEE, HAS BEEN ATTEMPTING THIS WEEK TO DELIVER A SPEECH ON HUMAN RIGHTS IN THE SENATE BUT HAS BEEN FRUSTRATED BY THE UNWILLINGNESS OF THE SENATE LEADERSHIP, PARTICULARLY SENATOR FRANK TOLBERT, TO ORGANIZE THE QUORUM NEEDED. IN A CONVERSATION WITH THE POLITICAL COUNSELOR MARCH 31, TUBMAN SAID THAT HE STRONGLY APPROVED THE EMPHASIS PLACED ON HUMAN RIGHTS BY THE CARTER ADMINISTRATION. TUBMAN SAID THAT IT IS THE OBLIGATION OF THE UNITED STATES TO DO FAR MORE THAN IT HAS IN THE PAST TO PROMOTE "OPEN SOCIETIES" BECAUSE, IF IT DOES NOT, HE FEARS THAT SOCIALIST DICTATORSHIPS WILL GRADUALLY DOMINATE THE EARTH.

2. IN AFRICA, TUBMAN SAYS THAT THE UNITED STATES MUST FIND WAYS TO INSIST THAT ITS FRIENDS ABANDON RESTRICTIONS ON HUMAN RIGHTS. HE CITED ZAIRE UNDER MOBUTU AS A CASE OF A COUNTRY ALIGNED WITH THE WEST BUT WHICH RESTRICTS UNNECESSARILY THE POLITICAL RIGHTS OF ITS CITIZENS. HE DESCRIBED THE PREVALENCE OF MILITARY DICTATORSHIPS IN AFRICA AS A "DISGRACE." TUBMAN SAID THAT IT
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IS NONSENSE FOR AFRICANS TO CONDEMN THE SUPPRESSION OF HUMAN RIGHTS BY VORSTER AND SMITH WHILE REMAINING SILENT ABOUT MURDERERS LIKE IKI AMIN AND WHILE COUNTENANCING LIMITATIONS ON HUMAN RIGHTS WITHIN THEIR OWN BORDERS.

3. TUBMAN SAID THAT IN LIBERIA ITSELF THE RECORD ON HUMAN RIGHTS IS FAR FROM GOOD. HE DESCRIBED AS X "SILLY" THE

OUTLAWING BY THE SUPREME COURT OF THE NEWSPAPER REVELATION IN EARLY 1975 MERELY FOR ITS PUBLICATION OF ALBERT PORTE'S CRITICISMS OF STEPHEN TOLBERT'S ACTIVITIES IN THE ECONOMY. "WHEREVER AN UNDERGROUND DEVELOPS IN A COUNTRY BECAUSE OF SUPPRESSION OF HUMAN RIGHTS WITHIN THAT COUNTRY, THE UNITED STATES SHOULD SUPPORT THAT UNDERGROUND," TOLBERT AFFIRMED. HE DESCRIBED THE LACK OF AN OPPOSITION PRESS IN LIBERIA AS "SCANDALOUS" AND BLAMED LIBERIANS WHO KNOW THEIR RIGHTS UNDER THE CONSTITUTION BUT LACK THE COURAGE TO EXERCISE THEM. ONE WAY IN WHICH THE U.S. COULD PROMOTE HUMAN RIGHTS IN LIBERIA, ACCORDING TO TUBMAN, WOULD BE TO SUBSIDIZE INDIRECTLY A NEWSPAPER LIKE THE LIBERIAN STAR SO THAT IT WOULD HAVE AN ECONOMIC BASE FROM WHICH TO COMPETE WITH THE TRUE WHIG PARTY ORGAN, THE LIBERIAN AGE.

4. TUBMAN APPROVES OF THE EMPHASIS OF THE PRESENT U.S. ADMINISTRATION ON HUMAN RIGHTS BECAUSE HE SEES IN IT EVIDENCE OF THE FACT THAT THE U.S. IS EMERGING FROM THE NEGATIVE PSYCHOLOGY INDUCED BY THE DEFEAT IN VIET-NAM AND IS ADOPTING A MORE POSITIVE APPROACH TO THE NECESSITIES OF COMPETITION WITH THE "SOCIALIST DICTATORSHIPS." HE SAID THAT HE BELIEVED THE CUBANS WOULD NEVER HAVE SENT TROOPS TO ANGOLA IF THE U.S. HAD NOT BEEN DEFEATED IN VIET-NAM.

5. COMMENT: AS SON OF THE LATE PRESIDENT AND EXTREMELY POPULAR IN HIS OWN RIGHT SHAD TUBMAN IS ONE OF THE FEW SENATORS TO MAINTAIN A RELATIVELY INDEPENDENT POWER BASE. IT IS LIKELY THAT THE TOLBERT ADMINISTRATION, HAVING ALREADY NOTED THE MILDLY CRITICAL VIEWS EXPRESSED BY SHAD TUBMAN IN AN INTERVIEW
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PRINTED IN THE LAST ISSUE OF THE REVOLUTION (ORGAN OF THE NEW YORK-BASED OPPOSITIONIST PROGRESSIVE ALLIANCE OF LIBERIA), HAS NO DESIRE TO HAVE TUBMAN USE THE SENATE AS A FORUM FOR HIS VIEWS OF HUMAN RIGHTS, PARTICULARLY SO SOON AFTER THE PUBLICATION OF THE HUMAN RIGHTS REPORT ON LIBERIA (REFTEL).
CARTER

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NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: HUMAN RIGHTS, SPEECHES, UPPER HOUSE
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 01-Mar-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977MONROV02207
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770113-1003
Format: TEL
From: MONROVIA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t197703103/aaaadmx.f.tel
Line Count: 104
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: b45688ac-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION AF
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 77 MONROVIA 2095
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 07-Feb-2005 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2945548
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: HUMAN RIGHTS: SENATOR SHAD TUBMAN'S VIEWS
TAGS: SHUM, PGOV, PINT, PINR, LI, (TUBMAN, SHAD)
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/b45688ac-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009